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CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM • LUCHE POR COMUNISMO • PLP

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Communist Ideas the Right Rx

Hospital Workers Beat Back Racist Attacks

PHILADELPHIA, September 15 — "Racism? You'll never stop it, never!" declared a retired hospital worker, echoing a pessimism many workers feel. But the promise of communist revolution is that the overthrow of capitalism removes the reasons racism exists. The lower wages paid to black, Latino, and immigrant workers generate billions in extra profits that the bosses can't do without. Racism also allows the bosses to divide the working class. Communist revolution against the class- and profit-driven system of capitalism is the first step in building the world without racism that most of us want.

At a meeting between the nursing bosses and the nurses, a black nurse with long years of service at a large teaching hospital spoke up against laying off the nursing assistants. Shortly afterwards, she was fired. Hospital workers were shocked and outraged.

The fight against the firing of this veteran black nurse shows how we can't back down from fighting racism and that the bosses will increasingly use fascist terror. As in other cities, the bosses at this hospital are increasing their attacks on patient care and the hospital workers. On at least one hospital floor, the bosses terminated all the nursing assistants.

PLP members have a long history at this hospital and immediately organized against the firing. We described the firing as racist and an example of fascist terror to scare the workers, especially nurses. We tied this racist firing to the recent police murder of the son of another black co-worker and described both as examples of fascism on and off the job.

Some workers, however, thought we shouldn't mention that the nurse is black or that the firing is racist. This opinion was expressed by both black and white, mainly nurses. Their main concern was that mentioning that the nurse is black and bringing up racism might alienate the doctors who also wanted to fight the firing. Working-class union members, on the other hand, saw the firing as clearly racist and agreed with our response. And interestingly, the nurses who disagreed with us about the firing being racist nonetheless participated in the actions we called for.

When our organizing became evident, the bosses tried to defend the firing by claiming that there was more involved than we knew, which supposedly justified the firing. Most workers thought this was a lie. So-called "friendly" nursing bosses repeated this claim but never offered any evidence. Yet even this pathetic defense illustrates a bigger truth.

It's the bosses who kill and hurt more patients, who cut healthcare funds, benefits and staffing and who close hospitals. Of course they won't be fired. Under capitalism, the

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Wildcatting Dockers' Baseball Bats Shut Ports in Seattle and Tacoma

SEATTLE, September 8 — Over 500 wildcatting longshoremen armed with baseball bats stormed the port of Longview here today, angry over the EGT company's refusal to hire members of their International Longshore and Warehouse Union to handle grain at the firm's new $200 million terminal, violating an agreement with the union. More than 1,000 other dockers did not show up to work, closing the ports here and in Tacoma.

At 4 :30 A.M., workers broke company gates, overpowered security guards and held them hostage.

"The...guards were outnumbered by people with baseball bats," declared Longview's police chief. "People were busting windows out of the guard shack. They took a security guard out of his rig and drove it into a dich."(NY Times, 9/9)

The militant workers blocked railroad tracks containing trains carrying the grain and cut the brakes of the rail cars, then dumped tons of the grain. Several were arrested for blocking the train.

The wildcatters defied a federal injunction and confronted cops called to the scene, threatening one seargant with a baseball bat. He retreated.

Union officials said they did not sanction the action. "It was a show of militancy reminiscent of labor actions a century ago." (NYT)

'They Shall Not Pass.'





Hart-Rudman 9/11 Plan Fell Short

U.S. Rulers Still Need Greater Fascism, More War

Obama's Ground Zero remembrance left out two names tied intimately to the 9/11 atrocity and its deadlier aftermath: Gary Hart and Warren Rudman. Just two years before the attack on the World Trade Center, the two ex-senators had co-chaired a top-echelon ruling-class panel that envisioned terrorist attacks "galvanizing" the U.S. for imperialist war abroad and fascist measures at home. Launched by President Bill Clinton in 1998, the U.S. Commission on National Security/21st Century (better known as the Hart-Rudman Commission) studied ways to ensure U.S. global dominance through the following 25 years.

Democrat Hart and Republican Rudman, along with other high-ranking politicians, generals and admirals, proposed a sweeping militarization of government and of society at large. At the time, the rulers' media kept Hart-Rudman largely under wraps. CHALLENGE, however, repeatedly exposed its deadly schemes well before 9/11. Ten years on, Hart-Rudman's shortcomings and successes for the bosses are worth assessing. They help us gauge our class enemies' need and their ability to conduct mass slaughter.

In 1941, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor turned mass U.S. opposition to "foreign wars" into mass support for U.S. entry into World War II. On September 11, 2001, terrorists struck New York and the Pentagon after the FBI and CIA apparently failed to connect the dots from existing intelligence. Ten years later, there is no shortage of theories to challenge the official narrative: Did U.S. rulers deliberately ignore warnings of the 9/11 strikes? Were they actively complicit in planning the attacks? We may never know the true story, but it's clear that the bosses saw the usefulness of a 9/11-type incident to rally U.S. workers behind a drive for war and fascism:

[T]he United States should assume that it will be a target of terrorist attacks against its homeland.... Americans will likely die on American soil, possibly in large numbers....If the stakes rise in such a fashion, one thing is likely to become vividly clear: The American people will be ready to sacrifice blood and treasure, and come together to do so, if they believe that fundamental interests are imperiled (Hart-Rudman report, 1999).

The hijackers, who cloaked al Qaeda's oil-profit motive in religion, represented only a few thousand sworn U.S. enemies. They hardly matched the 1941 menace of Nazi Germany and fascist Japan and Italy, an Axis of millions that waged world war across Europe and Asia. Within the U.S., this global assault spurred huge voluntary enlistments and acceptance of a military draft, resulting in an armed force of 14 million in a U.S. population just one-third of today's total. By comparison, the flurry of post-9/11 flag-waving accomplished relatively little: the fascist Patriot Act, plus a series of racist attacks against Arab and South Asian immigrants. U.S. rulers continue to rely on an economic draft for their war machine, with unemployment impelling youth to enlist for the lack of jobs.

Recalling the fleeting wave of 9/11 patriotism, the rulers' New York Times mouthpiece echoed Hart-Rudman in lamenting, "People wanted to be enlarged, to be called on to do more for country and community than ordinary life usually requires....to be absorbed in some greater good.... But America has not been enlarged in the years that have passed" (9/10/11). In sum, the attack failed to generate the popular response that Hart-Rudman had anticipated.

Anti-Government Bosses' Tea Partiers Hinder Obama's Fascist Effort....

Opposition to new or restored taxes, hardened by the New Depression, has dashed the Hart-Rudman vision of capitalists gladly parting with their "treasure." This reflects the battle between two factions within the U.S. ruling class: the Rockefeller-led wing that maps long-range strategy to keep U.S. imperialism on top through wars for the oil interests it represents; and its current adversary, domestic capitalists like the Koch brothers, who organized and funded the Tea Party and are driving the Republican Party away from any bipartisan strategy.

In opposition to Obama, the bosses who don't profit directly from U.S. military action overseas are thwarting Hart-Rudman's prescription for more centralized control over members of the ruling class. They are blocking government regulations to discipline capitalists and bankers who intensified the current economic crisis in their drive for short-term profits. They're also resisting Obama's bid to increase taxes on the wealthy to help pay for the enormous cost of imperialist wars.

....But As H-R Detailed, Potential Grows for U.S. Military Action in Iran, Saudi Arabia, Russia and China

On the other hand, Hart-Rudman has proved effective in helping to fabricate pretexts for invading Iraq in 2003, and possibly Iran in the near future:

U.S. policies could fail to prevent more serious threats from arising, and the United States might then increase its military presence either to support a beleaguered Israel, to contain the rise of a regional hegemon [Iran], or prevent certain countries [like Iraq] from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. From such a failure the United States would risk, or go to, war.

Ex-Saudi intelligence chief Prince Turki al-Faisal was a major backer of Osama bin Laden during the latter's U.S.-led anti-Soviet Afghan campaign in the 1980s. He now issues alarms against U.S. rejection of the Palestinians' bid for statehood in the United Nations: "American influence will decline further, Israeli security will be undermined and Iran will be empowered, increasing the chances of another war in the region. Moreover, Saudi Arabia would no longer be able to cooperate with America in the same way it historically has" (New York Times, 9/12/11).

Hart-Rudman foresaw loss of leverage over Saudi Arabia as an intolerable catastrophe:

An anti-American regime in Saudi Arabia, one so antagonistic that it would refuse to sell its oil abroad, is not very likely. But were it to come to pass and be allowed to stand, it would represent a major blow to the liberal economic order brought into being after World War II.

From Afghanistan to Libya, subsequent U.S. invasions, backed by a shifting array of allies, reflect Hart-Rudman's insistence on locking up hydrocarbon sources:

[U]ninterrupted supply of oil from the Persian Gulf, and the location of all key fossil fuels deposits will retain geopolitical significance....The United States will be called upon frequently to intervene militarily in a time of uncertain alliances.

Hart-Rudman's prediction of likely World War III scenarios completes its picture of U.S. rulers' looming concerns:

Interstate wars will not disappear over the next 25 years. Developed nations will be loath to fight each other, but as proven in 1914, neither the bonds of interdependence nor a taste for affluence can guarantee peace and stability indefinitely. Major powers—Russia and China are two obvious examples—may wish to extend their regional influence by force or the threat of force.

What Hart-Rudman Did Not Foresee

But Hart-Rudman neglected to consider the working-class backlash to the U.S. rulers' wars. Workers at first seemed to support Bush's "shock-and-awe" attack on Iraq, based on the fraudulent allegation that Saddam Hussein's regime had developed "weapons of mass destruction," including nuclear weapons. But as this became exposed as a lie, and U.S. and Iraqi civilian casualties mounted, a majority in the U.S. turned against the war. Initial support for the attack on Afghanistan also has fizzled after 10 years of grinding conflict with no end in sight.

Resistance to these wars has been heightened by the "Great Recession," another factor Hart-Rudman didn't account for. Workers now see trillions spent for imperialist wars while tens of millions of unemployed walk the streets and social programs are cut or scrapped altogether.

For the working class, meanwhile, all is not

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OUR FIGHT

✭Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

✭Only the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

✭Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

✭While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

✭Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. Everyone will share in society's benefits and burdens.

✭Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit black, Latino, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

✭Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

✭Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✭Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

✭Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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Why Articles Are Not Signed

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual. While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

Pickets Expose Racist Columbia University's Bogus Jobs

NEW YORK CITY, August 23 — Chanting "Jobs center is a phony, all their talk is baloney," comrades and friends joined once again with community forces to picket Columbia University's (CU) bogus Employment Information Center. The struggle against Columbia's racist takeover of the surrounding Harlem community sharpened both in militancy and political understanding with demands that the University immediately hire 2,000 Harlem residents to replace the jobs destroyed by expansion.

Other demands include not building the planned Level 3 biohazard lab right under 125th St. and maintaining affordable neighborhood housing. PLP's base has grown enough to start new chants that expand the politics of this struggle: "ExxonMobil, Columbia U, took Iraq and Harlem too," and "Racist Bollinger you can't hide, we charge you with genocide." (Bollinger is Columbia's president.)

In conversations and at meetings since May Day, we have been struggling against liberal ideas within the community coalition that has fought CU for years. After betrayals by the local politicians and the courts, many now see that building a movement from the bottom up is what is needed. Party members are also emphasizing that CU is run by a board composed of 75% ruling-class bankers whose wars for oil and gas are murdering thousands worldwide and lead to the racist cuts and unemployment here that hasten sickness and death for our sisters and brothers in Harlem.

We are planning to step up the attack on CU on September 24 by marching from the Employment Center, through the neighboring housing project, to the campus and to Bollinger's mansion, which cost $23 million to renovate. We will end with a picnic in Morningside Park to commemorate the victory of students, workers and community residents against Columbia's plan to build a gym there in 1968.

Making CHALLENGE sales a central part of expanding this struggle will help us win workers and students to the vital strategic goal of communist revolution.✪

Hospital Workers

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rich bosses hold state power and run the government. Only communist revolution can give these real criminals the "pink slip."

A week ago, the fired nurse was re-hired. But now the bosses are going after the workers whom they think led the fight for the fired nurse's job. Today, the bosses alleged that narcotics were "diverted" by another nurse, Wesley, who was ordered to have a Breathalyzer and urine test and leave the hospital. The results of the urine test were negative.

Wesley did not "divert narcotics." Wesley *does* have a long history of building multi-racial unity to fight for better conditions for patients and workers. Wesley *did* support organizing against the racist cop killing of the son of another hospital worker. Wesley *did* help organize the fight to reinstate the fired black nurse.

The hospital workers know Wesley well and did not waiting for the test results. The day after Wesley was ordered off the premises, a leaflet appeared all over the hospital calling on workers to demand that Wesley be brought back to work immediately. Workers are calling Wesley to offer their support.

Although the nurses are not unionized, Wesley has strong ties with Local 1199 union members. The leaflet urges them to call on the union and organize members to defend Wesley. The nurses who worked in the unionization drive with Wesley are urged to demand that the nursing union also support him.

As long as the bosses hold state power and remain in control, they will overturn any victories we might win. In 2012, the hospital bosses want union give-backs in benefits and pension that will hurt this 1199 local, which that is primarily black. These cuts will be as deadly as mass lynchings.

This experience shows that the bosses will fight us tooth and nail when we fight to protect a worker's job or protest against a racist police killing. Let's get off this capitalist merry-go-round and instead organize all our fights, big and small, with the goal of overthrowing capitalism once and for all. Capitalist racism and fascist terror can end — but only with communism. Join PLP.✪

The 'Mystery' Contract

LA Transit Workers Shout Down Hacks, Reject Sellout

At 11:30 PM on Friday, September 9, I received a call from a fellow transit worker informing me that, after more than two years without a contract, United Transportation Union (UTU) drivers at LA Metro were to vote on a new contract Sunday at 1 P.M. None of the drivers had any idea if it was a "good" or "bad" contract. The UTU leadership told them absolutely nothing except, "Show up Sunday and vote!"

By Sunday morning we'd been able to rally a small crew of friends and comrades to meet at the hotel where the vote was to take place. We brought leaflets (calling for a NO vote on the mystery contract) and the latest copy of CHALLENGE. We met drivers in the multi-level parking lot and by the time they entered the meeting room every driver had a flier, a CHALLENGE, or both.

I wasn't sure if I'd be turned away when I tried to enter the voting "Ballroom" (I'm not a driver) but my fears were foolish. As soon as I entered, I realized that the union leadership had a lot more to worry about than me. They were faced with nearly a thousand angry, shouting, hooting drivers demanding facts about the new contract, which the drivers all assumed was going to be a sell-out. It went on and on. Security couldn't do much. Even though the drivers were physically threatened, they refused to sit down, to shut up, or even to vote for the new contract.

At a coffee shop afterward, two bus operators said the union General Committee never got control of their meeting. A few hours after we got home, a driver called to say it was thumbs down on the contract: 365 to 206.

This experience reminded me that it is always a good idea to be ready to act — even on very short notice. The worker who called was glad to see that we had shown up to oppose the contract vote. The connection of the bus drivers' no vote, the recent Verizon workers' walkout, and the possible Southern California supermarket strike made it easy to approach drivers, sell CHALLENGE and urge a NO vote on the contract. On a minor note, all of us agreed it was a good way to spend 9/11.

Now comes the hard part — following up on the contacts we collected and working to be a communist presence in the ongoing transit struggle in L.A.✪



Hart-Rudman

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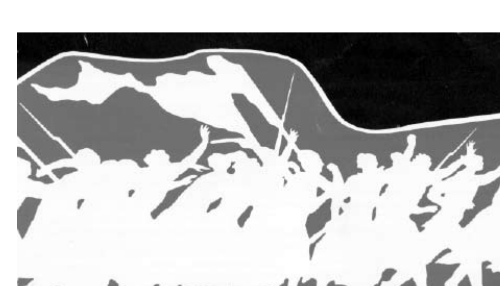
lost—not by a long shot. The main U.S. capitalists have yet to ensnare most workers in their ideology of militaristic imperialism. Restoring the draft remains extremely unpopular. Enlistments of young black workers have declined despite that group's 46 percent unemployment rate. Meanwhile, racist police attacks continue to rage against black and Latino youth. This is the "democracy" they're being asked to defend?

Communist Leadership Crucial

The most critical obstacle to Hart-Rudman's fascist vision will be the fight-back of the working class, both in the U.S. and internationally. While workers have remained relatively passive in countering the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan or the fascist attacks on their jobs and living conditions, there are encouraging signs of renewed resistance. We can see this domestically in the Philadelphia hospital workers' fight against racist firings (*see page 1*), or in the leadership given by Progressive Labor Party to the Stella d'Oro strikers last year in the Bronx, or in the militant defense of their jobs by West Coast longshoremen against the shipping bosses (*see page 1*).

Internationally, PL is spreading communist politics in a score of capitalist countries on five continents. The Party has been active in the mass strikes and demonstrations of workers in Pakistan (see page 4). In Haiti, PLPers are building the Party there to combat rulers' ideas that divide the working class (*see page 8*). PL is also playing a role in workers' struggles in Mexico and Israel/Palestine.

In the scheme of things, these are small glimmers of resistance in a dark night of mass racist unemployment, unchecked attacks on wages and healthcare, and genocidal imperialist wars. PL has a long way to go in building communist-led class struggle, but the potential exists for a true international communist party. Our job is to win workers worldwide to the opposite of Hart-Rudman: to the communist outlook that rulers fear most. Profit-driven terrorism, racism, unemployment and war will end only after our class—the working class—seizes power for itself and hoists the red flag of revolution.✪



Shut Plants, Block Roads, Battle Cops

Protests, Strike Wave Sweep Pakistan, Hit Bosses' Cuts

Hundreds of thousands of workers in Pakistan have been engaging in mass strikes and protests, taking to the streets, shutting down factories and offices, blocking roads and burning vehicles. Their anger is directed against a government riddled with corruption and against Pakistan's ruling class, who, like capitalists worldwide, are trying to make the working class pay the price of its economic crisis, slashing wages, laying off workers and attacking living standards. The working class is fighting back, undeterred by the brutal retaliation of the police, arrests and even killing of leaders:

• Earlier this month, over 100,000 textile workers in Faisalabad, Pakistan's third-largest city, shut down 20,000 power looms and took over the city. Men, women and youths armed with stones fought police equipped with rifles and guns; these workers comprise 38% of the country's industrial workers and produce half its exports.

• Ten thousand workers at the Karachi Electric Supply Co. occupied its headquarters a few weeks ago, forcing the bosses to reinstate 4,500 fired workers.

• Striking Pakistan International Airlines workers brought air traffic to a standstill, sitting in at airports in Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore and Peshawar, disabling ground service vehicles, blocking flights and stopping passengers from checking in. They were protesting layoffs and proposed selloffs of routes to Turkish Airlines.

• Railway workers organized a demonstration in Lahore against the proposed downsizing of 20,000 jobs, defying thugs employed by Pakistan's governing People's Party to intimidate them.

• Public sector workers in the Post Office, the Telecommunications Company, the Water and Power Development Authority, steel mills and the Federal Revenue Office are fighting privatization and firings.

• Ship breakers in Baluchistan and young hospital doctors from Baluchistan to Punjab are mobilizing for better pay and conditions.

Following the Lead of 50,000 Militant Textile Workers

These struggles follow the actions of 50,000 textile power loom operators who struck in 2008, shutting down factories for four days. Four leaders were arrested, framed under anti-terrorist laws and jailed. The judiciary, serving the rulers' dictates, declares workers' strikes illegal, rejects bail for arrested workers and ignores violations of labor laws, while failing to enforce minimum-wage laws and legal remedies for those losing jobs.

The workers — many who make $61 a month (less than the minimum wage) — have no pension rights, work in inhuman conditions and suffer grinding poverty. Thousands of other workers who marched in solidarity with them were fired on, with nine injured seriously. However, the strength of the protest forced the owners — among the richest people in Pakistan — to agree to the strikers' demand to be paid previously negotiated wage increases.

This year Pakistan's growth rate is only 2%, with an enormous trade deficit and a growing budget debt. Following International Monetary Fund dictates, the government has cut all subsidies, increased prices of food, (up 200% to 300% in the last two years), electricity, gas and most household items. In 2010 inflation rose higher than any year in Pakistan's history, affecting all working-class families and pushing the lowest-paid into intolerable living conditions.

Struggle Between Classes Heating Up

Class lines are sharply drawn in Pakistan. Since factories, businesses and land are often owned by politicians and army officials (who also run public utilities for their own profit), the confrontation between workers and bosses pits the working class directly against the full power of the state. But as workers' resistance increases, divisions are deepening in the ruling class.

The main opposition party (whose leaders are also big landowners and factory bosses) is maneuvering to lead the mass dissatisfaction by distancing itself from the despised Pakistan People's Party-led coalition government of President Asif Ali Zardari and the military. This struggle for power is behind the recent political and ethnic violence in Karachi, Pakistan's largest city, main seaport and financial center; 300 people were killed in July alone, in riots instigated by armed thugs hired by the warring political parties to spread hatred and fear.

Clearly, workers and peasants are not fooled by either party. Victories like that of the 10,000 Karachi Electric Supply Company workers has strengthened the working class and emboldened more workers to take militant actions.

Reforms Won't Cut It; Workers Need Communism to Destroy Racist Super-Exploitation

But workers need to look beyond reforms. Hard-won gains are easily reversed when bosses control the means of production and the state apparatus. Already Pakistani textile bosses are planning to move their factories to Bangladesh where workers — despite militant actions last year that doubled the minimum wage — are still paid half the wage of Pakistani workers. Lower labor costs mean lucrative contracts with international giants like JC Penney, Wal-Mart, H&M, Kohl's, Marks & Spencer and Carrefour, which already manufacture in Bangladesh.

These outfits employ blatant racism in exploiting these non-white South Asian workers, much as they do in the U.S., Britain, France and Germany. There they make super-profits off the backs of black, Latino and immigrant workers, based on lower wages, worse medical care, mass imprisonment and deportation threats. Meanwhile, Obama serves his U.S. bosses, bombing Pakistan and killing hundreds of civilians while sending billions of workers' tax dollars to arm the Pakistani military that enforces the poverty of workers there.

Workers need to unite internationally, across all borders, to support these embattled workers in Pakistan and expose the multi-national exploiters from the imperialist countries. Building PLP in Pakistan to destroy the capitalist profit system and erecting a worker-run communist society, and to eliminate bosses and profits along with the racism and wars they create, is the revolutionary road to follow.✪

Mexico : PLP's Internationalism Antidote to Bosses' Nationalism

MEXICO CITY, September 12 — Comrades from NY and LA who joined the Summer Project in Mexico showed Party members and friends here the international character of PLP. They contributed with their knowledge and experience in the class struggle, and we saw how similar workers' struggles are worldwide. This helped show our friends the failure of the capitalist system, even in the U.S., which is supposed to be the most technologically advanced and has one of the highest concentrations of capital.

PLP fights to develop a non-electoral world party that defends the workers, organizes struggles to learn how to overthrow capitalism, and spreads the understanding of the need to build a communist society.

Internationalism creates great fraternity, trust, and love for the working class. This explains our comrades' taking a leave from jobs and families to participate with us. In just a few hours there was great camaraderie amongst the summer project participants; we talked, shared, laughed, and planned the next day's activities. It was especially motivating to know that we workers are capable of acting for our own class under capitalism. Under communism it will be that much greater, since we will smash the bosses' ideas of racism, sexism and nationalism that divide us.

Internationalism Opposes Nationalism

Nationalism is used to divide workers. It tricks us with the line that we belong to one nation and that it belongs to us, rather than to the bosses. Therefore we must defend it from the "foreign" enemy, the invader who tries to "steal our wealth" or the immigrant "who takes our jobs." But in reality, the majority of workers do not own a home, or a piece of land, or have a job they can survive on. Using this two-edged ideology, of patriotism and fear the bosses and their army send the youth to kill other workers in their wars to defend their monopolies and wealth. Nationalism brings with it a huge dose of racism used at the bosses and politicians' convenience.

PLP is international because capitalism envelops the world. This system exploits *all* workers, and only worldwide working-class unity and class struggle will we be able to defeat it. Only then will we be able to build communism, a society without money, racism, or classes.

This Project was very important because it showed the level of international development within the Party. It also helped us to see our weaknesses as a collective, locally. We discovered the potential and commitment of our members. We have to keep organizing Summer Projects in Mexico. The exchange and experience enriched us. It will train us to continue developing our politics and give us the opportunity of living a little of the life that workers will have in the future. We experienced that which we are fighting for, the unity of the workers of the world. One class, one party!✪



France : Union Misleaders Divert School Strike into Dead-end

PARIS, September 16 — A national teachers strike — backed by the biggest high school students union and the main federation of parents — is looming in both the public and private schools. The teachers' unions are calling for a 24-hour walkout on September 27. They're demanding "an end to job cuts, a different budgetary logic," and "a democratic transformation of the educational system to ensure the success of all pupils."

But one-day strikes are no threat to the bosses or the government. They're a tactic the union misleaders use to keep control and divert workers' militancy into a dead-end.

Over 52,000 jobs were cut in education in the past four years. Another 16,000 have been axed this school year, and still another 14,000 are slated to go in 2012. Meanwhile, the student population has risen by 60,000 this year.



On the blackboard: "On Strike"
The pupil: "Those two words must be important. They keep cropping up!"

All this leads to larger classes, difficulty finding substitutes for absent teachers, and the elimination of optional subjects and individual aid for pupils.

In budgetary terms, real teachers' salaries have been frozen for 16 years. According to the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), "even if overtime and bonuses are included, the average salary of teachers [in France] remains below the OECD average."

An opinion poll published yesterday showed that 64% think the schools "operate badly," up from 40% in 2007; 60% say the school system does not ensure equal opportunity.

Indeed, 31% of the university students are the children of executives and highly-paid academics. On the other hand, 12% come from white collar families, and 10% are children of factory workers.

Capitalism, Class Bias and Racism Go Hand-in-Hand

It can't be any different under capitalism. Education in capitalist society is aimed at reproducing the domination of the ruling class. The children of the rich go to the best schools. A gifted minority gets scholarships. All other children are taught just enough to hold down a job, along with patriotism to make them loyal to the bosses and racism to keep them divided. In fact, a secret government report obtained in August by Le Monde newspaper says that racist and anti-Semitic insults and acts, aimed at both teachers and pupils, are becoming everyday occurrences in the schools.

Higher wages and no job cuts are reform demands that might be won, but the present economic crisis and social climate makes that highly unlikely. An isolated 24-hour strike certainly won't win these demands. And there's no way that the ruling class will permit "a democratic school system that ensures the success of all pupils."

The French teachers' unions are hardly raising revolutionary demands, aimed at winning teachers to realize the need for a revolutionary communist transformation of society. They're promoting the illusion that their demands can actually be met under capitalism, and that they're seriously fighting to obtain them.

The union hacks are looking to boost their popularity among teachers in the upcoming Oct. 13-20 elections to the labor-management boards that help run the school system. The outcome of those elections will determine each union's representation, and consequently public financing of the union officials' jobs. (Each union is apportioned a quota of paid hours during which its designated representatives are relieved of teaching duties. Not surprisingly, the union hacks leave the classroom permanently, and are paid full-time to "do union work.")

The one-day teacher's walkout is also a build-up to the October 12 national all-trades 24-hour strike. Widely-spaced one-day walkouts are the hacks' recipe for appearing to act while ensuring that momentum has no chance to build and workers remain manageable. In reality, both strikes are aimed at mobilizing workers to vote for the Socialist Party in the first round of the presidential elections on April 22, 2012. This, despite the fact that during the 2007 campaign, Socialist candidate Ségolène Royale was tape-recorded in a behind-closed-doors' meeting planning to double teachers' class hours!

Communist teachers need to bring revolutionary politics to the organization and staging of the September 27 strike. By denouncing the union hacks' corrupt scheming, and exposing how capitalist education serves to maintain the profit system, the strike could become a school for communism.✪

French Jobless Mounting

Official July unemployment in mainland France was 9.1% (2.6 million workers). If you include workers who've given up looking for a job and those working part-time because they can't find full-time jobs, the jobless rate rises to 16.1% (4.6 million workers in a labor force of 28.6 million people.

Official unemployment rates in the French overseas departments are much higher. The latest figures available — for 2009 — are 22% in French Guiana and from 22% to 27.2% for the islands of Guadeloupe, Martinique and Réunion. The 2011 unemployment rate on Mayotte Island is 25.4%. According to a 2010 government survey, 60% of the French population said unemployment was one of their top three worries.

In 2009, the latest year for which figures are available, 8.2 million people (13.5% of the population) lived in poverty, set at a monthly income of 954 euros or less (US$1,335).

Metalworkers Hold Bosses Hostage

HAM, FRANCE, September 16 — Angry metalworkers are holding five Constellium executives hostage at the factory here to force them to reconsider laying off 127 of the 200 workers. The factory makes aluminum window frames, bars and structures.

When the company president and three other executives arrived for a 10:00 a.m. visit, the 6:00 o'clock shift downed tools and confronted the bosses. The bosses claim they only want to close down one of two aluminum presses. The workers fear this is the first step to shutting the entire factory.

The bosses' defense of the layoffs infuriated the workers. When the bosses retreated to their offices, the workers closed the factory gates. They intend to relieve one another and hold the bosses hostage over the weekend, to press them to rethink their decision. A dozen gendarmes and the company president's personal bodyguard are stationed outside the factory gate.✪

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in concise letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses around the world.

'Uncle Joe will save us...'

This past week my students and I discussed the importance of the Soviet Union in World War II and to the world's working class. I explained that workers in the U.S. demanded Milt Rosen support for the Soviet Union as they struggled to fight German fascism. As we were talking, I remembered a speech given by PLP's late chairperson Milt Rosen and told them that U.S. soldiers in World War II used to say "Uncle Joe will save us yet." I explained that these workers didn't think that Stalin personally would save them, but that it was meant to convey the idea that the politics of the Soviet people were being put in action to stamp out the threat fascism posed to the entire world.

We never had the opportunity to meet the first chair of our Party, but we are saddened by our collective loss. But more than sad, we are grateful for the work he and many others undertook to advance communist struggle. The Party has changed our lives and given them new meaning along with new struggles and challenges.

Today we are working to put into action the politics which are based on the political struggles of our founders. We honor Milt, and in doing so we honor the struggle of workers everywhere. "Uncle Milt will save us yet" conveys our revolutionary optimism for the power and strength of our communist movement and the international working class. Long live the PLP! Fight for communism!

Seattle Comrades

Sexism Hurts Entire Working Class

On August 13, ten PL'ers and friends took part in the Washington, D.C. SlutWalk to raise anti-sexist politics. SlutWalk is an international anti-rape movement that began after a Toronto cop told women that, if they don't want to be raped, they should not dress like "sluts." At SlutWalk marches and rallies, women and men wearing everything from lingerie to jeans to burkas, make it clear that rape is an act of violence and dominance, not a reaction to someone's idea of inappropriate clothing.

At this event, survivors told their personal stories, and others spoke about a global "rape culture." PLP created a flyer explaining that rape and all forms of sexism hurt the entire working class. Sexism exists because of the historical development of class society. Capitalism exploits and super-exploits women as wage workers and unpaid household workers, while keeping the entire working class divided against itself. We found other participants were very receptive to the flyer, and members of our group were excited to hand it out.

Several people who are involved with the anti-sexist and anti-racist struggle for Latina housekeepers at the University of Maryland attended. This enabled us to see this struggle as part of a broader movement. We made good contacts and strengthened our own commitment to talking about sexism with our friends. One has joined a PL study group, and another asked to receive information about it. This turned out to be a great opportunity to talk to workers we wouldn't ordinarily reach, and to clarify my own thinking about sexism.

D.C. fighter

Chile : Reformers Set Bosses' Trap

The fight for access to capitalist education in Chile is a reformist one. Even though the politicians (listed below) have tried to hide their support of the bosses system. They have not been able to hide their reformist claws. This is a fight to reform the access and administration of the education system. The reformers have been erroneously using irresponsible forms of fighting like hunger strikes. The capitalist education and its reforms will never be able to satisfy the workers' needs.

The majority of the young leaders in the education movement belong to some of the political parties in the system (Socialist party, Party for Democracy, Christian Democrat Party, Chilean Communist Party [PC], etc.) and, evidently, they obey its respective political lines. No doubt about it! These parties form center-left coalitions, abandon Marxist politics, and run on a nationalist line of compromising within capitalism.

--- Though the PC calls itself communist, it has always been revisionist (uses bosses' politics) and played its cards to its own political benefit.

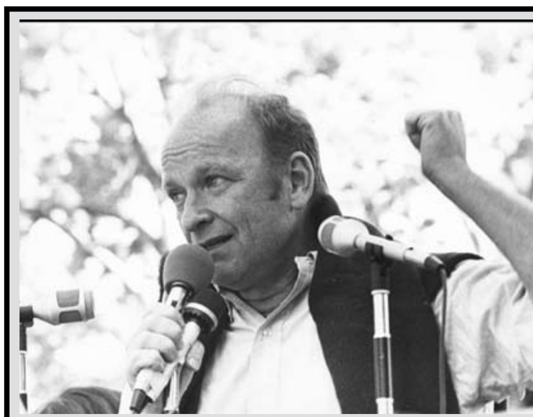
The reformists and revisionists control the official "opposition" politics in Chile, and its evident fundamental aim is to recover the power that they lost by the fascist regime of Pinochet's dictatorship.

In Chile, the parties continue supporting wrong strategies similar to the ones that helped to generate the disaster of Pinochet's military coup of 1973, which ended Allende's revisionist rule. Nationalism, not class, continues to play a fundamental role, and the erroneous reformist leadership frequently generates ambiguous situations for the workers.

Under capitalism, the education system is designed to keep the system running in the interest of the bosses. So, compromise between bosses and workers will not be able to change really anything. The real fight must be to transform the economy to satisfy the workers' needs. The change must be TOTAL, not partial.

The only real solution is the communist revolution and only PLP fights for this change.

A friend



Many members and friends have asked what we are doing to remember Milt Rosen, founding chairperson of PLP. Progressive Labor Party has established a fund to honor Milt and Harriet Rosen. The International Solidarity Fund will be used to continue our work training young leaders in the 25 countries where we have members and to spread PLP ideas all over the globe. This will help turn the idea of one worldwide communist party into reality.

Memorial Service:

Los Angeles on September 25, 2011
213-359-1733

Brooklyn, New York on Sunday, October 9, 20ll at 2 PM

Old First Church, Corner of 7th Avenue and Carroll Street

Make checks payable to CHALLENGE Periodicals. Write "solidarity fund" on the subject line or give to your local PLP club. Send to PO Box 808, Brooklyn, NY 11202

But Can't Do It Without Killing Capitalism:
'Horrible Bosses' Film Says, 'No Options? Kill 'em!'

I just saw the hilarious new movie, "Horrible Bosses," and want to recommend it to CHALLENGE readers. It is a full-fledged comedy about three buddies who decide, after realizing that they have no other options, to kill their bosses!

Each of the three has a different situation: Nick (Jason Bateman) is a dedicated white-collar worker whose deceitful, treacherous, and completely evil boss (Kevin Spacy) chastises him for being two minutes late for work, among other things. He fails to give him a promotion after leading him to think he'll get one for months, just to trick him into working harder. Nick tells the boss he's going to quit, but the boss threatens to blacklist him with all the other companies in the field.

Kurt (Saturday Night Live's Jason Sudekis) is another hard-working office worker for a small family-owned industrial company, and shows genuine concern for his coworkers. When the druggie, immoral, hedonistic son (Colin Farrell) takes over as head of the company after his father's death, he threatens to fire Kurt if he doesn't fire two other workers.

The third main character is Dale (Charlie Day), an innocent, young, and engaged-to-be-married dental assistant who is sexually harassed by his female boss, a dentist played by Jennifer Aniston.

The three men realize that each is stuck in a situation that they can't get out of. They also realize that each of them would not be able to find another job in the failing economy, and are left with the decision to find a way to kill each other's bosses.

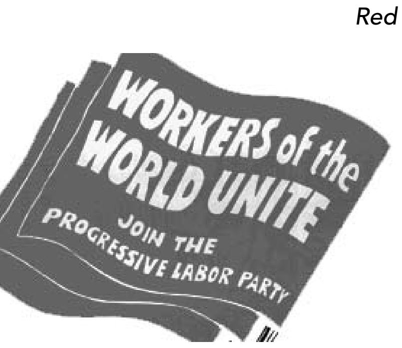
The rest of the film deals with the bumbling plans of the three men to carry out the killings. There are great supporting roles played by other top actors, especially Jamie Foxx as an equally bumbling potential hit man. A couple of his scenes expose the subtle racism of the three men, making their plans even more difficult. But in the end, things work out in a way that would generally please readers of CHALLENGE.

The film is not for everyone — much of the humor revolves around drug and sexual themes. But the jokes are there from the start of the movie until the end, and the contempt we feel for the three bosses does not dwindle. That was my main worry before seeing the film — that the writers would let the film's bosses off the hook at the end. But all three bosses get what they deserve. There's even a cameo at the end, by an actor many will recognize (I won't give that away), who plays a new boss, but it's clear, in a humorous little scene, that he'll be no better!

"Horrible Bosses" is obviously not meant to be a political film, but it can still be useful to communist organizers. It would be a fun way to introduce topics like class structure, capitalist methods of management, and how the threat of unemployment keeps us as wage slaves. It is also interesting to note that this movie is one of the few that deals with sexual harassment of women against men — which is of course far less common than the reverse — but in the movie's case could only happen because the male worker was employed by the female dentist.

Finally, I suggest that this movie be seen by comrades and their friends, followed by a discussion of what life would be like in a world without any bosses. There could be rich talks about several topics: the pitfalls of sexism, racism, and drug abuse; how wage slavery exploits us not just economically but emotionally, and intellectually, as well; why the increasing threat of unemployment leaves workers with few options; why you can't kill off the bosses without killing capitalism; and finally, how the workplace could be organized under communism, with workers directly in control of their environments.

Red Critic



'Stalin sent 12-year-olds in flying saucer to U.S.'?

Anti-Communist Trash: No Science, Pure Fiction

Annie Jacobsen and her new book "Area 51: An Uncensored History of America's Top Secret Military Base" have been popular with NPR, the New York Times, the Daily Show and Democracy Now. Her book is a rehash of what goes on at the U.S. military testing base in the Nevada desert. However, what is grabbing headlines are the allegations made in the book's final section.

Jacobsen alleges that the "Roswell Incident" — in which a UFO supposedly crashed in the New Mexico desert in 1947 — was actually a failed Soviet propaganda campaign. She claims that the UFO in question was a Soviet spy plane designed by the Nazi Horten brothers and flown by 12-year-olds who had been genetically/surgically altered to look like aliens by the infamous Nazi Josef Mengele. The plane was crashed in the U.S. in order to cause a War of the Worlds panic (reference to H.G. Well's novel that details the conflict between invading Martians and humans) that would serve as a cover for a Soviet invasion. The grand mastermind of this plan was, "naturally," Joseph Stalin.



This theory is yet another method to equate two diametrically opposing forces: the Nazis and Soviets. Nazism is a variety of fascism (a form of capitalism in crisis) at its most brutal combining vicious racism with sexism and nationalism. While Nazism is inherently anti-working-class, the Soviets were fighting for a workers' state. The Soviets vehemently fought the Nazis. Yet the U.S. continues to keep the workers in the dark through outright anti-communist lies.

Jacobsen's anti-communist nonsense was spewed forth by a single anonymous source (most likely her over-active imagination) without any concern for facts or evidence. The media, owned by the ruling class, has been praising the book's unscientific allegations. But facts are stubborn things, and they belie Jacobsen's tale.

Immediate problems arose in Jacobsen's story. Nazi Mengele did not disappear after the abandoning of Auschwitz concentration camp in 1945, but rather fled the Soviet Red Army, an odd behavior for a supposed ally. He worked in concentration camps, including Gross Rosen, before taking a job as a medic for the Wehrmacht (armed forces of Nazi Germany).

After the Soviet Union crushed Mengele's beloved Nazi regime, he continued fleeing west to Argentina on a CIA pipeline eventually ending up in Brazil. At no time was he ever in the Soviet Union, a country which would of course have executed Mengele if it got hold of him. Likewise, the Horten brothers fled west in the face of advancing communists. One brother wound up in Argentina, while the other took a job in the newly U.S.-imperialist-reconstituted West German Luftwaffe (air force).

Of course, these factual problems only add to the ridiculous rational problems in Jacobsen's fairy tale. For instance, how did an un-aerodynamic flying saucer aircraft, which neither Nazis nor U.S. engineers could fly, make the 6,000-mile journey from the Soviet Union to New Mexico? An aircraft so small that it had to be flown by 12-year-olds couldn't have held enough fuel for the trip, either.

If this was all a propaganda stunt to terrorize people in the U.S., why was the aircraft crashed in the desert of a barren, low-populated state? Why not LA or Times Square? If this master plan was a stunt to trigger World Was III, where was the war? Where is the evidence of Soviet forces on the brink of invasion? And why did the anti-communist U.S. conceal these horribly abused children from the world media? U.S. fabricated a myriad of stories (and clearly still do so) about the Soviet Union, yet they let this golden opportunity slip? If these were indeed 12-year-olds, how was Mengele working on them in 1935 in the USSR when he was known to be in Nazi Germany at that time? Apparently, Jacobsen's math is as bad as her journalism.)

These inconsistencies are due to Jacobsen's poorly constructed, poorly reasoned, anti-communist lies. It stands as proof that the U.S. media will promote any lie that defames the first workers' state. The capitalist class will go to any lengths to defame and erase the memory of the Soviet Union because it stands as proof that workers can take state power from the capitalist class, resist continuous capitalist invasions, and build a better world in the process. Every time that they fabricate another ludicrous lie about the Soviet Union, they hope to obliterate the memory of real, working communism further out of workers' minds.

By organizing workers into the PLP, we keep the memory and dream of communism alive for the working class. We build for the day when we can destroy the capitalist state and use communist state power to smash the capitalists once and for all.✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

U.S. imperialism: wide, getting thin

Otherworld.org, 8/20 — …On this Fourth of July…. we've turned the tables on the world. We're now occupying Afghanistan, fighting insurgents in Colombia, bombing Libya, encircling Russia, refueling in Kyrgyzstan, assassinating in Yemen, preparing an emergency air base in Paraguay, building a naval base in Korea, stationing soldiers in Honduras, flying bombing missions from Diego Garcia, parking missile cruisers in Romania, creating launch pads in Poland, and attacking parts of Pakistan every second day.

And this of course is just a partial list. The U.S. military admits to actually owning land in 46 countries and territories….More than one empire has collapsed for want of the wherewithal to maintain the upkeep. The Soviets were the latest. Now we're getting close….

Nearly 1 in 6 live in poverty

AM-NY, 9/14 — The U.S. poverty rate hit its highest level since 1993 last year with a record 46 million…living below the poverty line…. The U.S. Census Bureau said the poverty rate rose for a third consecutive year to hit 15.1% in 2010….

In New York state, the poverty rate climbed to 16% — up from 15.8% a year earlier….effecting over three million people...The U.S. has the highest poverty rate among developed countries….

In a sign of decline for middle-income [workers], the figures showed a continued decrease in the number of [people] with employer-provided health insurance, while the ranks of the uninsured hovered just below the 50 million mark.

Billionaire buys control of college

Otherwords.org — ….Then there are megalomaniacal mega-billionaires like the Koch brothers…

To advance their plutocratic cause, Charles Koch has gone on a shopping spree for an invaluable bauble that most of us didn't even know was for sale: academic freedom. And it's surpriseingly cheap.

For only $1.5 million, this Koch brother bought a big chunk of the economics department of Florida State University. His donation gives him control of a new "academic" program at this public institution to indoctrinate students in his self-serving political theories.

The billionaire gets to screen all [job] applicants, veto any he deems insufficiently ideological, and sign off on all hires. Also….he evaluates the faculty based on "objectives" that he sets.

Charles has made similar purchases of academic freedom at other schools, including West Virginia University….

U.S. ran Nazi-style live med. tests

NYT, 9/14 — The highest medical and legal officials of the American government and experts at Harvard and other top medical schools approved venereal disease experiments on people in the 1940s, which led to the deliberate infection of Guatemalan prisoners and mental patients with syphilis to test penicillin, a White House bioethics panel reported Tuesday.

The experiments were "gross violations of ethics"….The ethical errors were made by a startling array of public health luminaries….World War II fervor and the excitement over penicillin, then a scarce, new drug, contributed to the rush to test this promising medicine against venereal diseases that commonly afflicted soldiers….It was decided to keep the work secret…Dr. John C. Cutler…was put in charge….Later in his career, Cutler would help run the infamous Tuskegee study, in which black syphilis were left untreated for decades to study how the disease progressed.



Military women sexually assaulted

NYT — Women in the military who are sexually assaulted or harassed face obstacles not seen in the civilian workplace. They can't decide to take time off or quit, often have no way to avoid a predatory colleague or supervisor, and certainly in combat zones, no way to visit the human resources department. They often work in a culture that has long tolerated misogynistic behavior. And they can be further traumatized by the indifference or hostility of the bureaucracy that is supposed to help them.

Service women and veterans say they often struggle unsuccessfully to obtain health care and benefits related to sexual violence they endured while in uniform. The Service Women's Action Network…says the V.A.'s own data bears out the charge of unfair treatment….

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

How Red Ideas, Workers' Action Turned Around Sexist Youths

Here's to the working women of all lands;
Working night and day, often with no pay;
In your liberation men too will find salvation;
Some day you shall rule the earth.

— PLP Songbook

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI — The PLP Summer Project here became a proving ground — in struggle — for men to overcome their sexism and for women to lead class struggle, forming a bond between women and men working-class fighters.

At the freedom school here, a hot debate erupted during a class on ending violence against women. It was given by a friend in a socialist-feminist Haitian women's group we worked with in the clinic and the school. It was a good presentation as far as it went: factual, urging solidarity from men because this was their fight too, a fight against the system and its sexist ideology. However, it put too much stress on legislative remedies, relying on the bosses' state to protect women workers.

Suddenly there was an uproar of disagreement, taunting, shouting, mockery from the mostly young men present. One high-schooler waved the Haitian constitution, saying it contained nothing about stopping violence against women. Others asked, "What about violence against men?" and opposed the government's Ministry for Women (hypocritically established), "because there was no Ministry for Men." The moderators couldn't control the uproar. Though no one openly defended the right of men to use violence against women, that certainly appeared to be the subtext.

The reactionary protest seemed more about putting down a strong, progressive, young woman speaker rather than the issue of sexist violence — verbal abuse itself being a form of such violence. Many were shocked and surprised to see young men — with significant exceptions — openly expressing their sexist views and assuming they would find general agreement.

The speaker smiled calmly and held her ground strongly, when she could get a word in. Other women in the class, and men and women volunteers from the U.S., spoke up as well, citing the need for the working class to break through sexism's oppressive, divisive grip. But few young men seemed to change their minds, though clearly they registered the strong disapproval of the volunteers and the young women from Haiti.

How Change Occurred

Flash forward: On the last day of class, during student evaluations of the school, the same young man who'd waved the constitution related what he'd learned, of the need to build a movement for social change, for men and women to work together. Other young men who had taunted the original speaker said similar things. The focus had shifted from men against women to one of women and men working together in a common movement, a move in the right direction, though still far short of a real political understanding of capitalist sexism. Why the difference?

First, several later classes had discussed sexism. A class on "The Road Not Taken" (the origin of U.S. racism in the 17th century) showed how slaveholder violence and terror was necessary to break apart the social ties, including marriage, between European and African "servants" in the British colony. Pitting "races" against one another to establish and maintain slavery for Africans implied setting men against women, against the class interests of both. The teachers stressed how modern capitalism still uses racism to divide workers, drawing the analogy of the use of sexism as an ideological weapon against our class (the working class) — racism and sexism especially oppressing some of us and weakening all of us.

If men workers don't fight the oppression of women, who hold half the power of the working class, the men are cutting their own throats.

A later class presented overwhelming data on the oppression of women in Haiti, from wage, employment, income and education gaps to the incidence of rape, assault, maternal mortality and deaths from backyard abortions (abortion is still illegal in Haiti). When some men challenged their accuracy, the teacher showed how these particular data were in fact reliable within statistical limits.

This teacher then asked the students to write rhymes and raps about the statistics. Both women and men arose to do their raps against sexist oppression. Especially noticeable was how young women, who had scarcely dared to speak in class, boldly came to the front to present their raps on video tape, and how the young men, who might have taunted them earlier, now mostly listened quietly as women took the lead. (Readers in the U.S. who attend reports on the Summer Project will be able to see these videos.)

Another important, packed class, which lasted the whole morning, was given by a veteran woman leader who runs a women's clinic. She had non-class, liberal, reformist ideas. She marked turning points in the women's movement by the dates of reform women's organizations, pro-woman legislation, women electoral candidates, and so on.

Her basic politics resembled earlier classes. But her age and authority commanded a different kind of respect, even though again very young men used an aggressive, mocking style in addressing her. Her persistence, skill in debate, knowledge, and the grey hairs of a long life of struggle — with support from other speakers — had some effect on the young men.

Class Struggle Decisive

But something else was more decisive. We began to involve the students in political action. First, city workers joined in picketing the mayor who had fired them, owing back pay. They were allied with elderly people whose social security checks had been cut off by the same Mayor Gazon.

The next day, a city worker who had helped organize the PLP Summer Project — contacting the tent camp leaders — came to relate the struggle to the class, praising the international solidarity the school volunteers had shown to his co-workers and allies. He appealed for help, noting they too were workers, or soon would be. He made the essential point that workers need solidarity to expand our struggles, sisters and brothers together.

Then we heard of a nearby hospital workers' strike for back pay and for improving services for patients. At the union hall, the freedom-school students heard the union speakers and the volunteers who were health workers.

The next week, on the school's last day, we took virtually the whole school to join the strikers at a press conference (*see CHALLENGE, 8/17 for more about these struggles*). There, amid chants led by the volunteers of "Same Enemy, Same Fight: Workers of the World Unite!" (Creole: "Menm lennmi, menm lit; travayè nan lemond fè nou youn!"), our students sang a protest song, "Poukisa?" ("Why?"). The workers took it up on a march around the hospital grounds and to the Ministry of Health.

Women Take the Lead

Here the young women students were strong, militant and audible, taking the lead, bonding with the strikers, both women and men. The young men who had earlier taunted them were eager to fight, arm in arm with their sisters.

Communists, working in reform organizations like freedom schools, clinics, unions or women's groups, are all about winning workers during the reform struggle to revolutionary politics and to joining PLP. Men and women fighting shoulder to shoulder for the emancipation of working women are essential to the communist revolutionary process.

Our attempts this summer to forge this class unity for the coming battles in Haiti, though limited, moved in the right direction. Comrades there must carry on this political struggle within our ranks. Internationally, the revolutionary fight to abolish sexism is a single, indivisible struggle.✪

Nazism Alive and Well in Baltimore

Racist Capitalism Knows No Bounds

A "study" rivaling Nazi experiments on World War II prisoners were carried out in Baltimore's poor neighborhoods by the Kennedy Krieger Institute, affiliated with Johns Hopkins University, which for six years "knowingly expos[ed] black children as young as a year old to lead poisoning...exploring the hazards of lead paint" (NY Times, 9/16).

Lawyers in a class action suit said "more than 100 children were endangered by high levels of lead dust in their homes despite assurances from the...Institute that the houses were 'lead safe.'" The Institute provided no medical treatment to the children, who ranged in age from 12 months to five years old.

The "children were enticed into living in lead-tainted housing...and intentionally subjected to lead poisoning," said the suit, presumably to "assess the success of lead paint...abatement measures." The suit stated that, "Nothing about the research was designed to treat the... children for lead poisoning." Baltimore has the highest lead poisoning rates in the U.S.

One court compared the experiment "to the Tuskegee syphilis experiment which withheld medical treatment for African-American men with syphilis" (NYT).

One lawyer declared that when parents signed consent forms, the contracts failed to provide a complete and clear explanation about the research. David Armstrong, father of the lead plaintiff, said he was not told that his son, aged 3, was being introduced to elevated levels of lead paint dust. During the two-year experiment, the child received no medical treatment for lead. Later when he took his son to a pediatrician, he discovered the boy had blood lead levels 2½ to 3 times higher than before the experiment began.

"I thought they had cleaned everything [in the apartment] and it would be a safe place," Mr. Armstrong said. "They said it was 'lead safe.'"

The Institute's CEO said, "The research was conducted in the best interests of all the children enrolled."

Such are the depths to which capitalist racism sinks. Only by exterminating this stinking system will the working class ever be free of such racist attacks on our children.✪